

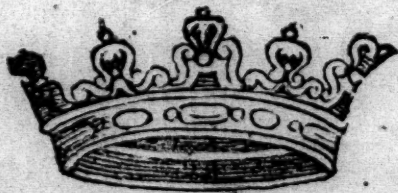
A JUST
CENSURE

Of a Seditious Pamphlet,

ENTITULED,

*The COMMON-PRAYER
BOOK UNMASK-
ED.*

By EDMUND ELIS Rector
of East-Allington in DEVON.



London Printed by T. Newcomb.

1660.

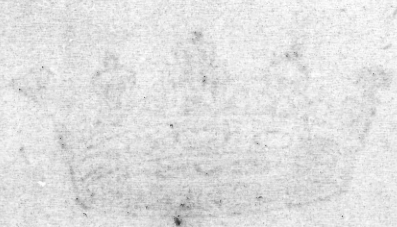
CELESTIAL

OLD SEVEN



THE COMMONS
BOOK

OF THE
VOLUME



London Printed by J. B. [unclear]
1860



A JUST
CENSURE
 Of a Seditious Pamphlet,
 Entituled,
The Common Prayer-Book UN-
 MASKED.



Onsidering those *scholastick* stirrs and *Controversies*, which are still amongst us, and how little good has been done by any of our *Disputes*, those men (most of them) who have been so long Deceiv'd still persisting in the same Errors, which have been

so often Confuted by the Writings of so many Godly and Learned Persons : I have often thought with my self, what should be the Cause that mens Errors being *Confuted*, their Persons should not be *Convinc'd* ; which I humbly Conceive to be *partly* This, That those Reasons which Evince the Falshood of many *Popular* Opinions, particularly this, That the Use of the Common Prayer is *Unlawful* (forsooth) and Superstitious, are not Exprest more *Briefly*, and more *Clearly* ; That those men who are most Busied in Secular Affairs, may finde Leisure enough to Read or Hear them ; and that the least Understanding, may be enough to comprehend them : For surely, As those Writings which are most suitable and *obvious* to the *Fancies* of men, are most apt to draw them into *Error* (as 'tis manifest by the great effect that Quakers Papers, and such like Pamphlets have had in this Nation.) So those Expressions are most apt to Guide them into the way of Truth, which are most Suitable to their Usual *Nations*, or Common Apprehensions of those plain and unquestionable Truths (or Propositions) from which we may *Infer* those *Conclusions*, which we endeavor to Demonstrate unto them. Some Experience of the Truth of this *Conception* I have found already by those endeavors, which it has prompted me unto : And I doubt not, but by His Strength, *In Whom*, and *For Whom* only I desire to *Act* in what ever I undertake, I shall in time do such things upon the same *Principle*, that if I should expreis them, it would be thought

to favor of that which, if my own heart do not deceive me, I utterly abhor, *viz. Vain Glory, or Ostentation*. I know very well how far I *do*, and *shall* probably *Incur* the *Malice* of some, and the *Scorn* of others: But I need not be Troubled for the *Censures* which I Suffer already, or be Afraid of those, which I may expect, sith, as for my *Doings*, I Dare Submit my self to the Judgment of my Lawful Superiors upon Earth; and for my *Intentions* to the Judgment of the GOD of Heaven.

And now, Reader, having premis'd This, I shall boldly tell thee, that having Consider'd the Usefulness of Forms of Prayer in the Publick Worship of God, and particularly of that Form which we call the Common Prayer: The thoughts I gather'd in the Contemplation of the Excellency of that Book fill'd my soul with Indignation against that *Seditious* Opinion, which has made some, who have so highly pretended both to Piety and Learning, to endeavor the utter abolishing of it: Hereupon I resolv'd to do what I could to finde out the Principal and *Leading* Arguments that have *Captivated* the Understanding of so many, and brought them into this Wicked Opinion, That the Use of the Common Prayer is Unlawful and Sinful, which has bred so much Mischief in this Church and State, that my Heart bleeds to think on't: Having no small Confidence, that if I could finde out those Arguments so much *Idoliz'd*

liz'd by the People, I should deal with them, as I have heard, that a Minister that went to convert *Indians*, once dealt with their *Idols*; I should *Bring them forth before the People and Break them in pieces*. In the pursuit of this Design, I wrote to Mr. *HUGHES* of *Plimouth*, and Mr. *FORD* of *Exeter*, and not receiving Satisfaction from them, I resolv'd to peruse the next Book that should come to my hands, Pen'd upon a design to prove that the Common Prayer is Unlawful: And lately there was brought to my Sight a Book, entitled, *The Common-Prayer Book Unmasked, Published* (as 'tis said) *by divers Ministers of Gods Word*, with this Motto in the Title Page, *John 4. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit, and in truth*. I thought here I should finde something like Reason contrary to this Position, *That we may worship God in spirit and in truth, in the use of that Form of Prayer*, which we call the Common Prayer; which Assertion I undertake to maintain against what ever can be produc'd to contradict it by any of those they call *Presbyterians*, or *Independents*, or *Anabaptists*, or *Quakers*, &c. In the Book I speak of, I found so little even of the *Appearance* of Reason, to declare (what the Authors pretend to do) the Unlawfulness and Sinfulness of the Common Prayer, that having read a little of it, and finding it so *notoriously* weak, I did almost resolve to Slight it, as a *Viper* that had lost its *Sting*: but, considering how apt the Common People are to let go the substance

stance of Truth, catching at such Shadows of it, as may Appear to some in the reading of this Vain, Empty Book: I thought with my self, that though it were not necessary to give a punctual Answer to so Frivolous a Treatise, yet it could not be lost labor to say something of it, to prevent the Mischief it might do upon some persons of weak Understanding: That which I shall say of it is this; The Principal Argument by which the Authors endeavor to prove, that The Common Prayer is Unlawful, is this, That (forsooth) 'tis wholly taken out of the Mass-Book. Whether it be, or not, I cannot tell, for I never read the Mass-Book; but this I know that 'tis very Improbable that any Considering Person, who Loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and has read the Writings of Him, whom they call FATHER BAKER, set forth by SERENUS CRESSY, under the Title of SANCTA SOPHIA, and the writings of THOMAS OF KEMPS, and such like Papists, can possibly deny, but that he has a full and stedfast hope that very many Papists, even in a great part of their Publick Service, Worship God in spirit and in truth: And therefore I boldly say, that this saying of the Authors of this Pamphlet, The Papists liking of the Service Book, makes it plainly appear, how little God likes it; for if it were pleasing to God, it would never please the Papists; is at best a Notorious Falshood, if not an Abominable Lye. Which in brief, I prove thus, Many Papists are
truly

truly *Godly*, Regenerate Persons; therefore it does not follow, that if the Common Prayer were pleasing to *God*, it would never please the *Papists*: If they should say, that it pleases the *Papists*, as such, viz. because 'tis suitable to those Opinions which they hold contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, I should call upon them to shew me what particular *Article* of that Doctrine they conceive to be any way Disagreeable to the Use of Our Liturgy.

Good Reader, seriously consider (as in the Presence of the *God of Truth*, to whom thou shalt give an account of all thy *Opinions*) whether or no, to say that the Common Prayer cannot please *God*, because it pleases some that are guilty of some gross *Errors*, as *Papists*, &c. be not so far Distant from any thing of Truth, that we may justly Fear that those who use such vain, frivolous *Arguments* to maintain their *Seditious Opinions*, do not themselves Believe what they Write. Sith that great Esteem which those that have so fiercely Oppos'd the Common Prayer have had amongst the Vulgar, as the only *Godly men*, has been a strong Motive to many of the most simple and ignorant of those that are truly *Pious*, to incline them to the same *Error*. That thou maist avoid this *Snare*, and not think *All Gold that Glitters*, not think all those so entirely *Honest men*, who call themselves *Saints* (though I heartily believe many of those who have heretofore been *Non-Conformists*, &c. to be truly *Godly*) Pray consider,

sider, That many Thousands of those very Hands that were employ'd in the *Tearing of the Service-Book*, were also *Imbru'd* in the *Blood* of our KING; That *Vertuous* Person, that *Gracious* Prince, that *Heroick* Sufferer, that *Glorious* Martyr: Whose *Illustrious* CHARACTER, so plainly set forth in His own Writings shall certainly *Shine* to All Posterity, to Discover His Innocency and Integrity, and *Spiritual Beauty*, and the *Foulness* of their horrid Crime, who *Rebell'd* against Him. I shall say no more at present to commend unto thee the Common Prayer, then onely to entreat thee to Read the *Writings* of CHARLES the First, and Observe the *Actions* of CHARLES the Second: The Mightry Patrons of that Excellent Book. Each *Paragraph* of the Book which was written by the First of these Glorious Monarchs, may well be term'd His *Encomium*: And, as for the Second, whosoever Understands *Vertue*, and *Him* (especially if he have read His late Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs) can hardly Speak a Word of Him, but he must needs Seem to *Flatter*.

Charles
II
bravo

Reader, Farewel: And if thou art ever engaged in any *Controversie*, Pray unto God that thou may'st be able to say from thy heart, however thy *Adversaries* deal with thee, (as, I trust, I shall ever be (through the continual Help of the God of PEACE) Glory be to GOD

B

on

on High, and on Earth Peace, Good Will to
wards Men.

FINIS.

Those who take notice of this Paper, I shall en-
treat to peruse also my Letters to Mr. Hughes.

